

**TRANSITIONAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STUDY**

**FOR**

**POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL**

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**MAY 2013**

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## **TRANSITIONAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Transitional Management Assistance Program (TMAP) was established in the National Park Service (NPS) to take a “snapshot” of the most significant issues facing a park/office at the time a superintendent/manager position of a park/office becomes vacant and there is a transition period to a new manager. The TMAP process attempts to identify the significant issues that should be addressed by the new superintendent/manager or in a transitional time period in park/office management

The TMAP team consists mostly of senior managers from NPS, mostly from the same region. The team uses questionnaires, interviews, personal observation, and methods such as the review of legislation, planning and management documents, and other administrative documents to identify significant issues.

The regional director collaborates with the new superintendent or manager to develop a “road map” based on the final TMAP report, of the significant issues that will be addressed by the superintendent in the coming years. The NCR Regional Director, Deputy Regional Director, and Associate Regional Directors are responsible for arranging the necessary assistance for the superintendent so he/she may have a greater chance for success in addressing the significant management challenges.

Once the report is complete, it is delivered by the team leader to the regional director in a personal briefing led by the Assistant Regional Director for Operations Evaluation. Within the 30 days that follows, the regional director presents the report to the superintendent with guidance on how to proceed to address the management challenges. Following this meeting, the superintendent has 60 days to prepare a TMAP implementation plan. The associate regional directors receive copies of both the TMAP report and implementation plan with the expectation that they and their staff will provide whatever assistance possible to help address the management challenges.

Through a group facilitation process, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (POHE or Trail) TMAP team collectively determined the most critical management issues that should receive the highest level of attention. The perception of the Trail’s established partners (as there is only one NPS employee in the Trail) guided the identification of these issues. The report identifies recommendations on issues that merit attention. In some cases the recommendation can be a specific course of action or merely a recommendation for more study. This TMAP study was initiated at the request of the superintendent of POHE. He was interested in hearing from his park’s stakeholders on the need for his park to transition to a new set of priorities. This study helps to identify the priority issues for POHE and will help to set the direction for the superintendent for the next 2-3 years.

## **POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL**

The National Trails System Act of 1968 authorized a feasibility study for a “Potomac Heritage Trail,” completed and published by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in 1974. In 1983, Congress authorized a corridor for development of the trail and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to enter into agreements with various entities for management of the Trail segments. This trail differs from the other nationally-designated trails in that it consists of a network of trails within a designated corridor.

As of 2010, 830 miles of existing and planned trails are recognized as segments of the Potomac Heritage Trail network. The Trail spans two major watersheds (Potomac and Ohio Rivers) and portions of five physiographic provinces (Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley, and Allegheny Plateau). It stretches from the mouth of the Potomac River at Point Lookout State Park in southern Maryland to a western terminus in Pittsburgh and a northeastern terminus in the Laurel Highlands in Pennsylvania.

Within the Trail is a diverse, braided network of trails and routes within portions of the five geographic regions. Some of these trails include the 70-mile Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, 150-mile Great Allegheny Passage, 184-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath, 23-mile Fort Circle Parks Trail, 18-mile Mount Vernon Trail, 23-mile Alexandria Heritage Trail, as well as many short hiking trails. Recreational activities provided by the Trail include hiking, biking, bicycling horseback riding, and paddling.

The lead bureau for management of the Trail is the NPS. Trail Superintendent Don Briggs is headquartered in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Several Harpers Ferry Center shared positions support the superintendent. Today, a large network of local, state, and federal agencies manage designated segments of the Trail network. The Trail passes through 17 national park units in NCR and NER. Partners are using the designated segments to focus attention on conservation and economic development goals to preserve historic landscapes and open space. At the same time, they create opportunities for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, boating, and cross country skiing.

The braided network also connects communities and special places and will link present and future generations with the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Potomac and upper Ohio River basins.

## STRENGTHS OF THE TRAIL'S ADMINISTRATION

The TMAP team members and partners participating in the study noted a very high number of strengths that will help the Trail superintendent carry out its mission to plan and operate the POHE in the coming years. These strengths will also serve as a good foundation for implementing the range of recommendations noted in this report.

- Superintendent Don Briggs has built partnerships to advance the Trail's development, enabled the Trail to develop, and been an ambassador for the Trail network.
- Don Briggs has been very receptive to suggestions, and solicits feedback for workshops, budgeting items, and partnership building. He fosters open communications.
- Don Briggs understands the various levels of government structures and is able to navigate them. He has been successful in bringing together federal, state and local governments and non-profit organizations. This effort has helped greatly in coordinating cross-jurisdictional issues.
- Don Briggs has been successful in identifying and leveraging funding for projects being developed by partners.
- Designation of locally generated POHE trail corridors has helped greatly in bringing together stakeholders, creating partnerships, and creating a strong sense of ownership among all participants.
- Designation of trail segments as part of the POHE has created public understanding of the significance of the natural and cultural resources of the Potomac River corridor and promoted volunteer support of the Trail.
- Development of the POHE signage program, newsletters, website, brochures, map/guides, and waysides has greatly increased visitor access and created team cohesion among partner agencies.
- Corridor-wide planning has enable localities to see how their small project fits into the greater initiative. Completed trail projects help to create a sense of place within local communities. Don Briggs has provided excellent support to localities on route planning, coordination, signage design, funding, and media materials/brochures.
- Several excellent projects include the route marking and graphic identity toolkit developed with partners and available online; bicycle route signage; and regional map guides.
- Consistent interpretive themes/maps help to unite the entire Trail corridor. The NPS has provided outstanding assistance with information kiosks and trail brochures.
- Coordination with Captain John Smith Chesapeake and Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trails on a Potomac corridor segment plan and a multi-trail interpretive strategy for southern Maryland demonstrates the possibilities and benefits of leveraging limited resources toward cross-cutting projects that are responsive to the needs of NPS partners.
- Cooperation with the Chesapeake Bay Office to fund and develop the Chesapeake Explorer App has leveraged limited resources to provide the public with a comprehensive tool for exploring the NPS along the Potomac.
- The use of cooperative agreements to enable NPS partners to do data collection and develop interpretive media projects has empowered partners take on stewardship of trail assets, while expanding the capacity of the NPS to share information about the Trail.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CATEGORY 1: INTERNAL NPS COORDINATION**

#### **1. National Park Service Units Should Fully Support the Potomac Heritage NST Where It Passes Through and Near National Park Units.**

The trail network passes through or near 17 national park areas in NCR and NER. The support for the trail is limited in these areas. Managers and staff of these areas lack an understanding as to what the trail network is, its role, and mission. The trail is not knit into existing park units where there is a trail over-lay and some park superintendents do not recognize the significance of the trail. There is a lack of cooperation in branding and installing trail logos and a sense of resistance among some managers to embrace trail volunteers.

The NPS is the designated lead agency for POHE and thus should take a strong leadership position for promoting the trail and its values. The regional directors should hold park superintendents responsible for supporting the development and use of the trail where it passes through their parks by incorporating such responsibilities in the Superintendents' Employee Performance Appraisal Plan. Superintendents should work with the POHE superintendent to develop multi-year strategic plans to guide long-term POHE trail development, management, and maintenance within each park, including specific strategies for safety, wayfinding, trailheads, interpretive displays, proper recognition on all printed and social media, and integration of and respect for volunteers providing sweat equity in the maintenance of trail segments. Further, these park superintendents and the superintendent of the Trail should cooperate in generating high park priority joint project statements to compete for funds to advance the Trail.

In turn, the superintendent of the Trail should look for opportunities to become more integrated in NCR operations:

- Considering the significant natural and cultural resources found within the Trail network, he should become more involved in the natural and cultural resources working groups in the region.
- The Trail offers significant interpretive opportunities to link many of the National Parks into a cohesive interpretive component of the NCR. He should actively develop and promote this concept with the NCR Division of Interpretation and Education.
- Each year the superintendent of the Trail should present to the regional director a work plan to better integrate the Trail in the daily life of the NCR and seek his/her support to implement it. The Trail by its very presence offers a tangible means to link much of the NCR and beyond into a necklace of connected parks.

It should be noted that while POHE is administratively situated within the NCR, communication with regional counterparts in the NER is imperative for operational and administrative consistency. It is recommended that POHE develop a NCR/NER communications strategy and seek approval and support from both regional directors for its implementation.



**2. Increase Interregional Coordination and Communication Among NPS Trail Units in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.**

Recommendation

Some partner agencies expressed frustration towards the NPS for a lack of internal coordination and communication between parks and trails such as POHE, CAJO, STSP, etc., resulting in time wasting redundancy and unnecessary repetitive actions.

The NPS parks and trails should coordinate their planning efforts so that partner agencies can interact with NPS more effectively.

**3. Enhance the Credibility and Visibility of the Trails Near the Potomac Heritage NST in NCR and NER by Cooperating to Create a Cohesive Trails Presence.**

Recommendation

Enhance the credibility and visibility of the other NPS trails near POHE in the NCR and NER regions, by cooperating to create a cohesive trails presence/voice both within each NPS region and externally to other public jurisdictions and private organizations. Trail superintendents within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed should consider joint opportunities/requests for funding and/or grants to increase award competitiveness. Likewise, if/when there are issues within a particular jurisdiction or partner agency, they should speak as one voice collectively, i.e. endorse one response letter with multiple signatures.

**CATEGORY 2: OPERATIONS**

**4. The NPS Should Take a Lead Role in Identifying and Seeking Applicable Funding Sources to Support the Trail's Development.**

Recommendation

The Trail corridor is under the management of a variety of local, state, and federal agencies and as such cannot rely on traditional NPS funding sources. As the lead designated agency for the Trail, the NPS should take a lead role in identifying a variety of funding sources including transportation and conservation oriented funds that can support a prioritized trailwide strategy for trail development and programming. Most often, these funding sources are focused on supporting state and local efforts, not those on Federal lands. These sources of funds would benefit the many partners involved in the Trail's management. The superintendent should support grant writing training for partners and promote joint grant submissions to enhance the competitiveness of the proposals. He should take the lead role in developing high priority project statements with NPS park superintendents to seek NPS funding in support of the Trail's development. He should reach out to other trails in the National Trails System via the National Trails Office to access existing resources and collaborate with other trails to develop resources presently lacking.

## **5. Create Methods to Measure Trail Use, Trail Effectiveness, and Trail Awareness to Better Inform Future Decision-making.**

### Recommendation

Properly developed evaluation tools to measure baseline and post-project metrics will support successful competition for limited funding. Recommend developing a Cooperative Ecosystems Study Unit partnership to develop and implement such studies and tools.

## **6. Critical Staff is Needed to Ensure the Successful Future Management of the Trail.**

### Recommendation

The current and future workload is more than a staff of one (superintendent) can manage effectively. Superintendent Briggs has admirably scrambled and managed to utilize interns, and shared or “borrowed” NPS employees to perform administrative and interpretive duties; while some consolidation of duties between other parks and trails has merit (especially in these times of limited financial resources) a baseline trail staff is imperative to effectively respond to the day to day demand of such a multi partner trail. No NPS park would be allowed to manage with only one staff person. The same measurement should be held for national trails as well.

A part-time interpretive specialist position shared with Harper’s Ferry Center has enabled the superintendent to take on additional interpretive media projects, such as the development of orientation kiosks and a mobile application. This shared position should be continued and supplemented with additional hours and/or staff to improve the future management and success of the trail. The superintendent should identify the staffing need(s) by functional area such as interpretation for an education specialist or administration for a purchasing agent or agreements coordinator for example. The superintendent needs to continue to show vision, communicate effectively, solve problems creatively, and promote collaboration among federal, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and partners.

The superintendent should:

- Continue to creatively support the trail with external resources such as with one or more CESUs to establish a long term relationship ensuring continuity within and between projects.
- Enter staffing needs into the NPS OFS for future consideration. Actively make his/her case with the appropriate regional officials to ensure a fair and equitable review of needs within the region. (Currently, there is only one request for an interpretive component (#11567A) with a park priority of 1.)
- Consider continuing and expanding a creative sharing of resources and services with other parks including general administration, agreements, contracting and other funding obligation services that can be charged against cost center/account numbers.
- Request project dollars through the Project Management Information System through which term employees could be hired for one-year appointments, renewable up to four years. While this is not an ideal long-term solution, it may help to alleviate some of the

work load on the superintendent until such time as an ONPS park base increase is approved and funded.

- Via a cooperative agreement (as mentioned below), a partner/friends group could take on tasks for project specific work at a substantially lower cost.
- Consider dividing the trail into administrative management sections/units or field offices. This will allow the superintendent to distribute the workload more broadly, improve communication, and reduce unproductive travel time. This format would also help the trail to 'grow' by providing a more localized presence for the trail's management functions, allow for more frequent personal contact, and to stay up-to-date on local issues that may affect the trail. This could also be accomplished via a partner/friends group as mentioned above.

### **CATEGORY 3: PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **7. Develop a Network of Non-Profit Support Groups to Make the Potomac Heritage NST Sustainable.**

##### Recommendation

Pursue creation of an over-arching partner support group whose role could include: trail management and maintenance; protection and management of properties; and/or fundraising (pursuant to DO-21). These groups will allow for comprehensive support for the entire length of the trail corridor rather than simply to one segment or jurisdiction of the trail. They could assist the superintendent with volunteer management, activities, programming, events, interpretation, and planning. Such a support group could also serve as the umbrella group for new and/or existing trail groups. These smaller, localized groups would work at the grass roots level, focusing on trail maintenance, as does the existing Potomac Heritage Trail Alliance (PHTA). Assembling partners from each segment/jurisdiction under the umbrella of another organization would also help the NPS to focus on defining the brand; shifting the focus toward the visitor experience; and identifying regional commonalities and differences to drive activities that achieve greater cohesiveness, consistency and continuity trail-wide. The over-arching support group would also help to foster a connection among jurisdictions, agencies, and local groups that they are part of a larger organization/mission.

As appropriate, prepare cooperative agreement(s) to allow more responsiveness and flexibility to the unique fiscal demands of a partnership trail including physical trail maintenance and operations needs, and land acquisition. This would also ease some of the workload on the superintendent.

## **8. Focus Available Funding on Priorities or Targeted Areas through Development of a Trail Protection and Development Strategy**

### Recommendation

While the creation of new trail during the developmental years was primarily opportunistic, the Trail should now focus on strategic (yet flexible) trail development to close the remaining gaps. This trail development plan (sometimes called a trail protection plan) could simply rate/rank the gaps in a priority order, such as low, medium, high, taking into account such parameters as interested property owners, size of gap, dovetailing opportunities with regional land trusts and any political sensitivities with partner agencies and jurisdictions. Any plan should maintain flexibility in response to changing priorities. Different funds sources/opportunities too often dictate the nature of how funding can be used. It may require a partner or matching funds; and may need projects that are ‘shovel ready’. These are factors that can come into play and need to be kept in mind and understood by the partner agencies.

Establish direct communication with, and request support from, the WASO Lands Division to implement land acquisition needs. Submit land acquisition requests through the NPS LARS on an annual basis.

Coordinate with other trail management units and/or NPS parks for joint requests that promote maximum benefit for trail implementation, protection, and preservation.

Continue to move existing projects forward that have momentum and support.

## **9. Focus on Improving Trail-wide Cohesiveness, Consistency and Continuity**

### Recommendation

The trail user experience in each region varies greatly - surface treatments differ (asphalt along the roads; stone dust on the towpath trail) as the trail travels through rural, suburban and urban environments. Segments are also in different states of planning, readiness and/or completion, especially along the southern portion in Northern Virginia. This makes articulating a visitor’s experience of the trail difficult, and leads to confusion about how and what to manage to maintain a quality trail experience.

Clearly articulate existing and desired visitor experiences along each segment. Consult with lead partners in each region to clearly articulate the similarities and differences in the existing and desired user experience. Identify commonly-desired features among regions (e.g., quality interpretation, unified signage elements).

Use segment analysis to articulate and target trail messaging. Use these similarities and differences to articulate unified and targeted trail messaging that still ensures a balance between varied local identities and experiences with trail-wide POHE brand consistency. This is especially important for trail regions where the existing trail experience is already an intrinsic part of their region’s identity.

Update “Identity Design Guidelines for Partners” to include successful examples of wayside exhibits and application of the Trail logo on partner signage. Provide more explicit direction for partners on use of the Trail logo and other graphic elements (such as the black band, use of the NPS arrowhead, color palette, et cetera) to encourage greater graphic consistency across NPS and partner products.

Promote greater usage among jurisdictions of the identity guidelines. Partners’ usage of common graphic templates and integration of POHE graphic elements will promote greater graphic consistency across all interpretive media and strengthen POHE brand identity.

Develop, in concert with local partners, a route marking plan. Identify the most important places to install signage, such as in transition areas between neighboring segments and in areas under planning or development. Draw on best practices (such as bicycle trail crossings) that will make the experience of travelling the trail safer and more visually cohesive. State concurrence with the route marking plan will facilitate marking the route consistently across states and local jurisdictions.

## **CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH**

### **10. Promote to the General Public the Concept of a Comprehensive Multiple Trails System**

#### Recommendation

Promote to the general public the concept of a comprehensive multiple trails system including POHE and other federal, state and local trails that intersect or are near POHE (i.e., CAJO, STSP, WARO), thereby promoting the interconnectivity of the trails, and the opportunity for the public to craft a greater and grander variety of trail tours and experiences. Create a unigrid which contains all the NPS trails and perhaps others within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

### **11. Develop Messaging Centered on the Trail’s Land and Water Features.**

#### Recommendation

The POHE name, description, messaging, and route marking convey an inconsistent and confused impression for the public who may be planning on using the trail. The name “Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail” is awkward and not descriptive; the trail’s current description defines the trail as a designation instead of a host of varied recreation and learning experiences. This makes trip planning difficult and leads to many people using trail segments under other names not knowing that they are also following the POHE.

Convene partners to clearly define what the trail is. Define the trail for the public as the provider of a range of visitor experiences, and articulate its physical location as the link within a large geographic region between Pittsburgh and the Chesapeake Bay. Trail messaging should include where to get on the trail and the kinds of experiences users can have. The goal is to get more

people consciously on, experiencing, and caring about the POHE. Some commonly asked questions the messaging should answer are:

- What is the POHE? (beyond a congressional designation) Rather, as a set of experiences)?
- Where is it? How do I get on it?
- What are the varied recreation and learning experiences I can have?
- Why is this route worth using and protecting?

Develop messaging around the definition that capitalizes on the POHE's unique characteristics. These intrinsic characteristics distinguish the trail as a whole from the visitor experience opportunities offered by shorter trails and individual sites. These include POHE's:

- National Significance.
- NPS unit designation (which promises a park-like experience – an implication that national heritage areas such as the Blackstone and Erie Canalway capitalize on).
- Proximity to several million residents, and linked to metro and airport networks and other hiking and biking destinations.
- Scale – the Potomac River's extents from Pittsburgh to the Bay provide an extensive physical spine that can be used in messaging to communicate the ability of the POHE to connect people and communities with land- and water-based resources.
- Ability to connect stories by linking the individual stories of shorter trails into a grander integrated narrative that sheds light on the intrinsic nature of "Potomac Heritage."

Capitalize upon on the trail's land and water connections. The river is the spine common to all of the bicycle segments that comprise the POHE. With increased interest in and support for strengthening land-water connections within the Chesapeake watershed and getting more people out on the water, the POHE should capitalize on the river as a mechanism to deliver messaging about the visitor experience and to unify segments, and bring in new river-focused audiences with shared interests in the river's protection.

- Focus on the water as a fundamental resource, and the physical spine which ties POHE segments together.
- Identify and promote experiences that people can have on the water.
- Engage water-focused interest groups, outfitters, et cetera in learning and recreation experiences that tie POHE land routes with public access.
- Incorporate water quality messages in interpretation and messaging.

## **12. Focus on Communicating the Visitor Experience to the Public**

### Recommendation

Planning and implementation to date has primarily been conducted with and through local jurisdictions and site partners. Messages about what the trail is are not reaching the public and potential trail users. Messaging so far has successfully built a base of support for and stewardship of the POHE network among primary partners, but new branding and messaging needs to look outward, beyond existing partner networks, to more effectively reach trail users.

Develop targeted messaging for public audiences. In consultation with primary partners, prioritize the trail's target audiences and articulate and direct messaging toward them. The goal is to get more people using the POHE to identify their activity as a POHE experience.

Audiences including the following should be prioritized when targeting messaging:

- Bikers, existing and new outfitters, direct marketing organizations (DMOs).
- Existing and potential local and regional partners.
- Environmentally-focused and place-based educators.

Implement and broadly circulate targeted messaging. The goal is to build a public base of support for and stewardship of the POHE network.

Develop, test and promote POHE itineraries. Dedicate interpretive staff time and solicit partner input to develop and test itineraries that facilitate trip planning that explicitly feeds off of the POHE network, and provide these itineraries online and to outfitters and visitor information centers.

Develop and make easily accessible a suite of graphic materials and guidelines. Make varied templates easily available for download online, with information for partners on how to use templates and guidelines on graphically integrating the arrowhead, black band and POHE logo with their own graphic templates and media.

## **CATEGORY 5: GEOGRAPHIC NEEDS**

### **13. Celebrate the Character of the Different Geographic Regions but Create a Consistent Trail Experience**

#### Recommendation

The POHE is a long trail that traverses many different regions and jurisdictions. Due to different characteristics of these regions and jurisdictions, the POHE needs to maintain flexibility in the types of trail experiences offered. However, the POHE needs to be consistent in trail quality and signage so that users recognize the trail no matter which region they are in.

Establish goals for the trail based on the unique issues and demands of each region. The regional plans should establish and evaluate the desired visitor experience(s), trail type(s) trail user(s) and trailheads/access/egress points.

Create design guidelines for the trail. The design guidelines should establish design parameters and construction standards for wayfinding, materials, dimensions, accessibility and safety, and desired experience all within the context of the designated user(s) of segments of the trail. Design guidelines will help establish standards for the trail and will help keep the trail identity and standards consistent for the visitor.

#### **14. Establish the Potomac Heritage NST on the South Side of the Potomac River Northwest of Washington, DC.**

##### Recommendation

Currently, the POHE is well defined on the north side of the Potomac River north of Washington, D.C.; however, northwest of Loudoun County, Virginia, there is a lack of trail segments on the south side of the Potomac River.

Continue to push for changing the legislation to incorporate West Virginia into the POHE area. Gaining West Virginia in the POHE area would allow access to the South Branch of the Potomac River and would connect the main spine of the POHE to other recreational facilities such as the Nathaniel Mountain Wildlife Management Area, the Brandywine Recreation Area, and beyond to the George Washington National Forest.

Evaluate trail connections and potential pedestrian bridges to connect the two sides of the Potomac River. There are resources and recreation opportunities on each side of the Potomac River; however there are a lack of connections across the Potomac River, causing visitors/users to stay on one side of the River. The NPS should work with local and regional stakeholders to identify points of interest and evaluate opportunities for connections across the river.

#### **15. Fill in the Trail Gaps from Mount Vernon to Fredericksburg.**

##### Recommendation

Currently, there is a continuous hiker/biker path from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Mount Vernon in Virginia; however, south of Mount Vernon there are multiple gaps between trail sections and the trail changes material and user type making it difficult for visitors to continue south.

- Work with the Department of the Army and Fairfax County, Virginia, to identify a connection from Mount Vernon through Fort Belvoir and beyond. The POHE trail segment from Mount Vernon to Pohick Bay Regional Park could connect users on the Mount Vernon Trail to the existing large trail systems at Pohick Bay Regional Park, Mason Neck State Park, and Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge. The trail in this section would also connect the user to multiple historic sites, such as George Washington's gristmill, Woodlawn Plantation, the Pohick Church, and George Mason's home.
- Evaluate trail locations and connections in Stafford County. A study should be completed to evaluate potential trail routes including adjacent to the Potomac River or a route more inland. The study should evaluate costs, impacts to the environment, and visitor experiences.
- Work with stakeholders on connections through Quantico Marine Corps Base to Prince William Forest Park. The NPS should consider creating a working group/ task force comprised of Prince William County, Virginia Department of Transportation, Prince William Forest Park, and the Marine Corps to evaluate possible trail routes. A trail in this location could connect the visitor to the National Marine Corps Museum, Locust



Shade Park, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, and other amenities in Prince William Forest Park.

## **16. Explore Additional Visitor Options in the Northern Neck of Virginia**

### **Recommendation**

The POHE in the Northern Neck of Virginia is a poorly defined on-road bike route suitable only for experienced cyclists. It is recommended to explore potential destinations in the Northern Neck and consider opportunities for use by a wider cycling audience such as families and the casual cyclist as well as expanding use to include water recreationists. Areas to evaluate include connections to George Washington's Birthplace, Stratford Hall and Westmoreland State Park.

## **17. Designate Existing Southern Maryland Trails as a Part of the POHE**

### **Recommendation**

The State of Maryland has created multiple trails within the POHE southern Maryland section that the State would like to designate as segments of the POHE; however, the designation process has been long.

NPS should work with the State of Maryland and local jurisdictions to continue evaluation of existing trails in southern Maryland that could be incorporated into the POHE system. This includes but is not limited to the southern Maryland portion of the Potomac River Water Trail and the Indian River Trail.